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A TIMELY DISCOURSE

Dr. Talmage Preaches a Sermon on

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Example from the Life

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"Then the king commanded, and they

brought Daniel and cast him into the

den of lions."

Darius was king of Babylon, and

the young man Daniel was so much

a favorite with him that he made him

prime minister, or secretary of state.

But no man could gain such a high

position without exciting the envy

and jealousy of the people. There

were demagogues in Babylon who

were so appreciative of their own

abilities that they were affronted at

the elevation of this young man. Old

Babylon was afraid of young Babylon.

The taller the cedar the more apt it

is to be riven of the lightning. These

demagogues asked the king to make

a decree that anybody that made a

petition to anyone except the king

during a period of 30 days should be

put to death. King Darius, not sus-

pecting any foul play, makes that de-

creed. The demagogues have accom-

plished all they want, because they

know that no one can keep Daniel

from sending petitions before God for

30 days.

So far from being afraid, Daniel

goes on with his supplications three

times a day and is found on his home-

top making prayer. He is caught in

the act. He is condemned to be de-

voured by the lions. Rough execution-

ers of the law seize him and hasten

him to the cavern. I hear the growl

of the wild beasts and I see them paw-

ing the dirt, and as they put their

muzzles to the ground the solid earth

quakes with their bellowings. I see

their eyes roll, and I almost hear the

fiery eyeballs snap in the darkness.

These monsters approach Daniel.

They have an appetite keen with hun-

ger. With one stroke of their paw

or one snatch of their teeth they may

leave him dead at the bottom of the

cavern. But what a strange welcome

Daniel receives from these hungry

monsters! They fawn around him;

they lick his hand; they bury his

feet in their long muzzles. That night

he has calm sleep with his head pil-

lowed on the warm necks of the tamed

lions.

But not so well does Darius, the

king, sleep. He has an attack of ter-

rific insomnia. He loves Daniel and

hates this stratagem by which he has

been condemned. All night long the

king walks the floor. He cannot sleep.

At the least sound he starts, and the

flesh creeps with horror. He is im-

patient for the dawning of the morn-

ing. At the first streak of the day-

light Darius hastens forth to see the

fate of Daniel. The heavy palace

doors open and clang shut long be-

fore the people of the city waken.

Darius goes to the den of the lions.

He looks in. All is silent. His heart

stops. He feels that the very worst

has happened; but, gathering all his

strength, he shouts through the rifts

of the rock: "O Daniel, is thy God

whom thou servest continually able

to deliver thee?" There comes roll-

ing up from the deep darkness a voice

which says: "O king, live forever. My

God has sent His angel to shut the

lions' mouths that they have not hurt

me." Then Daniel is brought out from

the den. The demagogues are hurled

knock you down." "I do not like

you," says the snowflake to the snow-

bird. "Why don't you like me?" said

the snowbird. "Oh," said the snow-

flake, "you are going up and I am

coming down." Young merchants,

young lawyers, young doctors, young

mechanics, young artists, young farm-

ers, at certain times there are those

to sympathize with you, but now that

you are becoming a master of your

particular occupation or profession,

how is it now, young lawyers, young

doctors, young artists, young farm-

ers—how is it now? The greatest

crime that you can commit is the

crime of success.

Again, my subject impresses me

with the value of decision of char-

acter in any department. Daniel

knew that if he continued his adhe-

rence to the religion of the Lord he

would be hurled to the lions; but,

having set his compass well, he sailed

right on. For the lack of that ele-

ment of decision of character so em-

inent in Daniel many men are ruined

for this world and ruined for the

world to come. A great many at 40

years of age are not settled in any

respect, because they have not been

able to make up their minds. Per-

haps they will go west; perhaps they

will go east; perhaps they will not;

perhaps they will go north; perhaps

they may go south; perhaps they will

not; perhaps they may make that in-

vestment in real estate or in rail-

roads; perhaps they will not. They

are like a steamer that should go

out of New York harbor, starting for

Glasgow, and the next day should

change for Havre de Grace, and the

next for Charleston, and the next for

Boston, and the next for Liverpool.

These men on the sea of life ever-

lastingly tacking ship and making no

headway! Or they are like a man

who starts to build a house in the

Corinthian style and changes it to

Doric and then completes it in the

Ionic, the curse of all styles of archi-

tecture. Young man, start right and

keep on. Have decision of character.

Character is like the goldfinch of Ton-

gah. It is magnificent while stand-

ing firm, but loses all its beauty in

flight. How much decision of char-

acter in order that these young men

may be Christians! Their old asso-

ciates make sarcastic flings at them.

They go on excursions, and they do

not invite them. They prophesy that

he will give out. They wonder if he

is not getting wings. As he passes

they grimace and wink and chuckle

and say: "There goes a saint." O

young man, have decision of charac-

ter! You can afford in this matter

of religion to be laughed at. What do

you care for the scoffs of these men,

who are affronted because you will

not go to ruin with them? When the

grave cracks open under their feet,

and grim messengers push them into

it, and eternity comes down hard

upon their spirit, and conscience

stings, and hopeless ruin lifts them

up to hurl them down, will they

laugh then?

I learn also from my subject that

men may take religion into their world-

ly business. This is a most appropri-

ate thought at this season of the year,

when so many men are starting out